

Dear esteemed members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

I wish to express my fierce **OPPOSITION** to HB 5653 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION

It should come as **no surprise** to anyone that the concept of an ammunition tax is, **yet again, being proposed**. It should also not surprise anyone that, like many times before, I will submit testimony against this.

Joining me, once again, will be a **legion of gun owners** of an ever-increasing **diversity** of socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, genders, and ethnic/racial backgrounds. Many of these will be **new** gun owners. Many of these have come of age and started their Constitutional journey in the pandemic, post-Bruen world.

While I suspect that funding for community-based violence programs is a worthwhile endeavor, know that **singling out** American citizens who are exercising a **constitutionally protected** right, who lawfully possess firearms, and are **not the root of the violence** to “pay just a little more” is **classist** and **unjust**.

You asked for 50%. You failed. You asked for 35%. You failed.

Now you ask 15-20%. **Know that we will not tolerate ANY amount.**

It is unconstitutional. A right should not be subject to an **excise tax**, whether it is 50%, 35%, or in the case now of HB 5653, an estimated 15-20% tax. This bill is, in my estimation, a biased attack and a spiteful punishment against gun owners. **Representative Gilchrist most assuredly hates us.**

It unfairly **disadvantages individuals of lower socioeconomic class**. This isn’t just my opinion but was also the **opinion of many state representatives and senators** when something similar **was proposed SEVERAL TIMES** in the past. One only has to imagine the single mother, on a fixed income, who lives in a crime-ridden city, who relies on training, practicing and carrying her firearm to protect herself and her family to see it as unfairly disadvantaging her.

It will be utterly **ineffectual at reducing suicides**, which account for **66%** of all gun-related deaths.

It will be **ineffectual at reducing gun crime**. This is isn’t an argument that “criminals don’t obey the law”. It is instead a logical and practical one. The vast majority of **criminals obtain their guns, and the ammo, by stealing it** or by buying these stolen items on the black market. Criminals by and large do not frequent gun shops nor buy guns at retail. Even if they did, the current statute requires that all ammunition purchases require a permit. Even without these barriers and factors, to think that a felon who wishes to buy ammo will be dissuaded from doing so because of a tax, is delusional. Simply put, in any way you look at it and, in any reality, this proposal will not make us safer.

After **handily defeating** this bill’s concept **year after year after year**, and now, in a **post-Bruen world**, it is truly a marker of desperation and delusion that Representative Gilchrist proposes this again.

Dr. Walt Kupson

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